

## OPINION 1647

*Heteronota pelagica* Girard, 1857 (currently *Gymnodactylus*, *Cyrtodactylus* or *Nactus pelagicus*; Reptilia, Sauria): given precedence over *Gymnodactylus arnouxii* Duméril, 1851

### Ruling

(1) Under the plenary powers the specific name *pelagica* Girard, 1875, as published in the binomen *Heteronota pelagica*, is hereby given precedence over the specific name *arnouxii* A. Duméril, 1851, as published in the binomen *Gymnodactylus arnouxii*, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms.

(2) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:

- (a) *pelagica* Girard, 1857, as published in the binomen *Heteronota pelagica*, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over *arnouxii* A. Duméril, 1851, as published in the binomen *Gymnodactylus arnouxii*, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
- (b) *arnouxii* A. Duméril, 1851, as published in the binomen *Gymnodactylus arnouxii*, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over *pelagica* Girard, 1857, as published in the binomen *Heteronota pelagica*, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms.

### History of Case 2527

An application for the conservation of the specific name of *Heteronota pelagica* Girard, 1857 was received from Dr G.R. Zug (*National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.*) on 19 July 1985. After considerable correspondence the case was published in BZN 46: 38–40 (March 1989). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

A comment from Dr A.G. Kluge (*University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.A.*) opposing the application was published in BZN 46: 46–48 (March 1989).

A comment from Prof Hobart M. Smith (*University of Colorado, Boulder, U.S.A.*) was noted on the voting paper: 'The current state of ferment in the taxonomy of the complex to which the names *arnouxii* and *pelagica* refer makes suppression of the former, as requested, premature. The nomenclature of the group is entering an era of upheaval that precludes maintenance of the stability once enjoyed before the complexity of its taxonomy was realized. It would nevertheless be unfortunate to see the name *arnouxii* replace completely the far more widely used name *pelagica*, if indeed they are regarded as conspecific, and at the same time it would be unfortunate to suppress *arnouxii* toward that end should it develop that it is based on a taxon different from *pelagica*. A compromise that might serve at least minimally the needs and concerns of both Zug and Kluge is a decree by the Commission simply that *arnouxii* should not be used as a senior synonym of *pelagica*, but that it remain available'.

It was noted on the voting paper that in Dr Kluge's comment 'sexual' [BZN 46: 47, line 5] should read 'asexual', and that Drs Zug and Kluge agreed that both names, *arnouxii* A. Duméril, 1851 (with New Caledonia as the most likely type locality) and *pelagica* Girard, 1857 (with a type locality in Fiji), were based on parthenogenetic

female specimens. It was also noted, in connection with Prof Smith's comment, that Dr C. Moritz and co-workers use *arnouxii* as a senior synonym of *pelagica* [see BZN 46: 46–47]. Drs Zug and Kluge have pointed out that a number of junior synonyms are available, if required, for bisexual populations at present referred to by the names *arnouxii* or *pelagica*. Dr Kluge had added [BZN 46: 47] that workers in the future may wish to separate the asexual populations in New Caledonia from those in Fiji and both names *arnouxii* and *pelagica* would then be needed.

Two alternatives, suppression of *arnouxii* (proposal B, published in BZN 46: 39), and precedence of *pelagica* over *arnouxii* (proposal C), were offered for voting. Proposals B and C both involved the use of the plenary powers, and in proposal A the Commission was asked to vote on this; rejection of proposal A would have maintained the priority of the name *arnouxii*. Commissioners were invited to record a preference for B or C even if voting against A.

### Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 1990 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 1991 the votes were as follows:

Proposal A. Affirmative votes — 20: Bayer, Bock, Cogger, Corliss, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Kabata, Kraus, Lehtinen, Mahnert, Minelli, Mroczkowski, Nielsen, Nye, Savage, Schuster, Starobogatov, Trjapitzin, Uéno

Negative votes — 8: Cocks, Heppell, Holthuis, Macpherson, Martins de Souza, Ride, Thompson and Willink.

Proposal B — 1: Trjapitzin.

Proposal C — 26: Bayer, Bock, Cocks, Cogger, Corliss, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Heppell, Holthuis, Kabata, Kraus, Lehtinen, Macpherson, Mahnert, Martins de Souza, Minelli, Mroczkowski, Nielsen, Nye, Ride, Savage, Schuster, Starobogatov, Uéno, Willink.

Having voted against proposal A, Thompson did not vote for proposals B or C. Although recording a vote for proposal C rather than B, Ride emphasized that he was not in favour of the Commission using its plenary powers in this case. He added: 'If as the result of the voting, the name *arnouxii* remains available the holotype should be replaced (following an application, preferably from Dr Kluge or Dr Moritz and co-workers) with appropriate modern material with good genetic and biochemical data and from a precise type locality. Until this is done, the situation vis-à-vis *pelagica* will remain unstable.'

### Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*arnouxii*, *Gymnodactylus*, Duméril & Duméril, 1851, *Catalogue méthodique de la collection des reptiles du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris*, p. 44.  
*pelagica*, *Heteronota*, Girard, 1857, *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, 9: 197.